

Higher Education Workgroup  
Review of Transfer  
\*\*DRAFT DISCUSSION DOCUMENT\*\*  
10-1-09

Guiding Principles:

The number of students who successfully transfer from two- to four- year institutions in the Commonwealth will not significantly increase if financial, course offerings (i.e. time, location, and format), advising, and workforce/curriculum alignment barriers hamper the transition process. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) plays a critical role in serving as the first institution of higher education for the majority of Kentucky's citizens. As the Governor's Higher Education Work Group and other parties rethink transfer strategies to address existing barriers and improve access and success in transferring, the following list of principles will help guide decision-making:

- Pathways must be effective in leading more community college students to transfer to universities and earn bachelor's degrees.
- The number of unnecessary credits students earn on the path to a degree must be minimized.
- Transfer requirements must be transparent and easy to understand for students, families, and counselors.
- Transfer technology systems must be robust in accommodating the requirements of multiple degree programs.
- Degree programs in majors that meet high-priority state needs must be strategically targeted to ensure ease of transfer.
- Stakeholder desires for change must be feasibly balanced with institutional interest in setting standards and requirements for transfer.<sup>i</sup>
- Common learning outcomes should be aligned for general education and majors to ensure consistency of quality and rigor across institutions.

Transfer Challenges<sup>ii</sup>:

- Financial barriers
  - Financial aid for part-time students is limited, and there are few scholarships specifically for transfer students.
- The delivery of academic services
  - Course offerings (i.e., time, location, and format) do not always accommodate the nontraditional or working student.
  - A limited number of degree programs are offered by universities on community and technical college campuses.
- Students' academic planning, preparation, and knowledge about transfer
  - Students do not always have a career plan in mind and subsequently do not plan for transfer.
  - Students are not aware of the transfer process.

- The transition from the two- to four- year institution can be a time consuming and arduous process.
- These students face additional barriers (e.g. fear, relocation) that need to be addressed at both the sending and receiving institutions.
- Students' perception of the benefit of higher education
  - A baccalaureate degree is often not needed for securing a job in one's hometown.
  - Older students are less likely to plan to transfer.
  - Students whose parents did not earn a bachelor's degree are less likely to plan to transfer.

#### Possible Policy Responses:

- More Seamless and Rigorous System:
  - Align common learning outcomes for general education and majors to ensure consistency of quality and rigor at all public institutions.
- Financial Solutions:
  - Create new or modify current state financial aid programs to encourage eligible students to transfer.
  - The state should develop a strategy to increase the number of potential college students who complete the FAFSA. Options include partnering with tax preparers, one-stop career centers, adult education centers, and other organizations. Institutions could utilize Educational Opportunity Centers and TRIO offices to help students complete the FAFSA (Kentucky Adult Learner Initiative Policy Recommendation).
- Flexible Delivery of Academic Programs:
  - Encourage development of statewide joint admissions/enrollment programs between KCTCS and four-year institutions.
  - Encourage expansion of upper division program offerings tied to joint admission and enrollment programs and offered through distance learning and resident instruction in alternative formats (e.g. accelerated and modular formats) and times (e.g. evenings and weekends).
  - Develop policies and programs that encourage greater use of KYVC and KYVL and other distance learning formats to increase access to baccalaureate degree programs for place-bound students.
  - Ensure transferability of relevant experiential learning (e.g. residential or online courses, CLEP, military credit).
- Transparency of Information:
  - As a part of the Governor's College Access Campaign, encourage middle and high school students to consider entry into transferrable associate degrees at KCTCS.
  - Provide professional development opportunities to high school counselors to inform them of the opportunities for high school graduates to begin their higher education experience at KCTCS with the intent of transferring to a Kentucky four-year institution.

- Support institutional implementation of a statewide technology system to provide transparent information to students and advisors.
- Create an advising process and have advisors clearly identify how the path a student pursues at KCTCS (certificate, Associate in Applied Science, Associate in Arts, or Associate in Science) impacts the transferability of their course credit.
- Consider offering transfer orientations and transfer college fairs in the first semester to all potential transfer students, and advise them to choose a major or degree program and institution of transfer by the time they register for their 30<sup>th</sup> credit hour.
- Identify KCTCS students' intent to transfer by adding a check box to the course registration form that indicates student interest in receiving transfer information.
- Revise statewide policies to inform students of acceptance of credit that meets graduation requirements for the specific program the student enrolls in at the time of transfer. Upon receipt of the transcript evaluation, students could/will sign a form that they have been notified specifically of what transfer credits apply toward graduation in their chosen degree program. If a student changes their major, they will be prompted to conduct a degree audit to determine what transfer credits meet graduation requirements for the new major.
- Provide clear and easily accessible institutional processes for resolving disputes about transfer of credit.
- Student Motivation:
  - Encourage employers to offer Lifelong Learning Accounts or other educational assistance benefits and develop personnel policies that can assist adults pursuing baccalaureate degrees (Kentucky Adult Learner Initiative Policy Recommendation).
  - Encourage business and industry involvement in the development of policies and programs (e.g. Metropolitan University, Career Pathway partnerships between Jefferson Community and Technical College/Norton Healthcare/Jewish Hospital) that clearly tie transfer and baccalaureate degree attainment to valued employment outcomes.

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<sup>i</sup>Moore, C. & Shulock, Nancy. (August 2009). *Crafting a student-centered transfer process in California: Lessons from other states*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy.

<sup>ii</sup>2004 CPE/KCTCS survey of nearly 5,000 KCTCS students' perception of barriers to transfer.